



GRANDPARENT CAREGIVERS PILOT PROGRAM



INFORMATION GUIDE

The Grandparent Caregiver Pilot Program will help older people with low incomes who are raising their grandchildren, great grandchildren, great nieces, or great nephews. District residents who qualify may get money every month to help care for children living with them. Please read the following fact sheet thoroughly along with the attached "Frequently Asked Questions."

Who will run the program?

The DC Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA) will take applications and run the program. CFSA has a complete application package that includes the materials you need for the background checks but other organizations have the application form. There are several community organizations available to assist you in completing the application process. Those organizations are listed in the "Frequently Asked Questions".

Is this program for me?

You must meet **ALL** these conditions.

- ☐ Your grandchild, great grandchild, great niece, and/or great nephew under age 18 lives with you.
- ☐ The child has lived with you for the past six months or more.
- ☐ You have been the child's primary caretaker for the past six months.
- ☐ The child's parent has not lived with you in the past six months. (This doesn't count if the parent gave you standby guardianship of the child, or is a minor enrolled in school or a minor with a medically verifiable disability which prevents them from caring for the child)
- ☐ You live in the District.
- ☐ The total of all money coming into your household is below 200 percent of the Federal poverty level (see box).
- ☐ You have applied for Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) for the child.

Total number of people in your home is:	Total yearly household income is less than:
2	\$26,400
3	\$33,200
4	\$40,000
5	\$46,800
6	\$53,600
7 or more	\$60,400

- ☐ All adults living in your home must submit the results for national and local criminal background checks and a Child Protection Registry check (to rule out child abuse).

Does this program have limits?

Yes. **Getting into the program is first-come/first-served.** You can use money from this program only to care for the children you list in the application.

How do I apply?

Call 202-442-6009 to ask for an application by mail. You can also visit our office at the address below to pick up an application. If you plan on coming to the office it is strongly recommended that you make an appointment first.

Should I do anything now to get ready?

Yes. Take these steps before you apply.

1. Gather the necessary documents to show you are the child's primary caretaker. You can qualify in two ways. The first way is to provide one of the following documents:
 - A court order, signed by a judge, granting you custody of the child; or
 - A court order, signed by a judge, granting you standby guardianship of the child, pursuant to D.C. Code § 16-4801–4810; or
 - A decree, signed by a judge, stating that you have adopted the child; or
 - A custodial power of attorney form signed by a parent granting you custodial power of attorney of the child pursuant to D.C. Code § 21-2200.

Or, If you do not have any of the above documents, you may still qualify by providing proof from each of the following two categories:

- a) One of the following:
 - Records showing that you enrolled the child in school the most recent school year or that you are the primary educational contact for the child; or
 - Immunizations or medical records, no more than two years old, indicating that you are tending to the child's medical needs; or
 - Proof that you have received either SSI or TANF for the child; or
 - A letter from any legal, medical, military, law enforcement, social service or similar professional, or your landlord describing your status in caring for the child.
- b) You must demonstrate that both of the parents are unable to care for the children because of death, incarceration, lack of involvement, abandonment, voluntary relinquishment of custody, separation due to abuse or neglect, active military assignment, or serious illness. To do this, you can provide:
 - A death certificate for one or both parents; or
 - A letter from any legal, medical, military, law enforcement, or social services professional describing the situation; or
 - A signed statement from the caregiver, sworn under penalty of perjury; or

- A court order sentencing a parent to prison or another form of state or federal confinement; or
 - A report by CFSA substantiating an allegation of abuse or neglect, or other reports from medical or other professionals establishing that the child has been abused or neglected.
2. Apply for Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) for the child. Call the DC Department of Human Services, 202-724-5506.
 3. Get a criminal background check of everyone age 18 or older living in your home. Get fingerprinted at the Metropolitan Police Department, Criminal Record Checks, 300 Indiana Avenue NW, third floor, during regular business hours. Each person must show a driver's license or other government-issued identification. If you obtain the application package from CFSA, we will cover the cost of the \$35 background check for up to two adults living in the household. Applicants are responsible for the \$7 fee required to get the DC criminal records check. ***All persons 18 years or older, who are living in the household are required to get both the national and local criminal background checks.***

How much money can I get?

The amount you receive depends on several factors including the age of the children and the amount you currently receive from TANF or SSI. The amount is based on a daily rate so your check each month will fluctuate. On average your monthly per child amount could be anywhere between \$586 and \$895.

Where can I get more information?

Call 202-442-6009 during regular business hours or visit <http://cfsa.dc.gov> . If you would like to speak with someone in person, please call ahead to schedule an appointment. **IF YOU ARRIVE WITHOUT AN APPOINTMENT YOUR WAIT TIME COULD BE SIGNIFICANT.**

D.C. Child and Family Services Agency ▪ 400 6th Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20024-2753 ▪ (202) 442-6000 ▪ www.cfsa.dc.gov



Frequently Asked Questions

Do I need legal custody to qualify for the program?

Not anymore. The D.C. Council recently passed the Safe and Stable Homes Act which changes the Grandparent Caregivers Pilot Program to no longer require legal custody. Now, you must prove that you are the child's primary caregiver. There are two ways you can do this:

The first way is to provide one of the following documents:

- A court order, signed by a judge, granting you custody of the child; or
- A court order, signed by a judge, granting you standby guardianship of the child, pursuant to D.C. Code § 16-4801–4810; or
- A decree, signed by a judge, stating that you have adopted the child.

Or, if you do not have any of the above documents, you may still qualify by providing proof from each of the following two categories:

a) One of the following:

- Records showing that you enrolled the child in school the most recent school year or that you are the primary educational contact for the child; or
- Immunizations or medical records, no more than two years old, indicating that you are tending to the child's medical needs; or
- Proof that you have received either SSI or TANF for the child; or
- A letter from any legal, medical, military, law enforcement, social service or similar professional, or your landlord describing your status in caring for the child.

b) And, you must demonstrate that both of the parents are unable to care for the children because of death, incarceration, lack of involvement, abandonment, voluntary relinquishment of custody, separation due to abuse or neglect, active military assignment, or serious illness. To do this, you can provide:

- A death certificate for one or both parents; or
- A letter from any legal, medical, military, law enforcement, or social services professional describing the situation; or
- A signed statement from the caregiver, sworn under penalty of perjury; or
- A court order sentencing a parent to prison or another form of state or federal confinement; or

- A report by CFSA substantiating an allegation of abuse or neglect, or other reports from medical or other professionals establishing that the child has been abused or neglected.

I've adopted my grandchildren. Am I still eligible?

Yes. Please provide us with a copy of your adoption decree.

The child's parent lives in my home. Am I still eligible?

You remain eligible under certain circumstances. The parent may continue to reside in your home if they have designated you as the child's standby guardian, or if the parent is a minor (under 21 years old) who is enrolled in school or has a medically verifiable disability that prevents him or her from caring for the child. Please provide us with documentation to establish these.

I'm the child's aunt, not the grandparent. Am I still qualified?

No. You must be the child's grandparent, great-grandparent, great-aunt, or great-uncle. No other relationships are eligible. Informal relationships such as "godmother" are not eligible. You will be required to prove this in your application through legal documents, birth certificates, or the legal custody order itself.

How do I prove that I am the child's grandparent?

You prove this in your application through legal documents, birth certificates, paternity acknowledgements or court reports. For example, if you are the child's paternal grandparent (a parent of the child's father) you can provide a letter from the child's father acknowledging he is the father and his birth certificate showing you are his parent.

What is the Child Protection Register Check and why do I need it?

The child protection register is our database of those persons responsible for the abuse or neglect of a child. The law requires that all adults in the house fill one out so we can ensure the safety of the children in households receiving the subsidy. You are not automatically disqualified if you are listed in the registry. All cases are reviewed on an individual basis. Please fill out the register check completely, have it notarized or witnessed and provide us with the **original**. Failure to include this form or provide the original will delay your application, as we must have an original signature to process the check.

Why do I need a criminal background check?

ALL adults (anyone 18 or over) in the house must submit the results of a local criminal history check and be fingerprinted for a federal background check. This is a requirement of the program and helps to ensure a suitable environment for the children in the household being considered for a subsidy. You are not

automatically disqualified because you or someone in your home has a criminal record. The CFSA reviews every case individually and takes into account the entire situation. This includes how long ago the conviction occurred, the type of conviction, and the circumstances surrounding it. It can take anywhere between 4-8 weeks before we receive the results of the fingerprint check. We have no control over this process and cannot expedite it. Your application is not considered complete until we receive the results

I've been told I cannot get TANF for the children because I get SSI. Am I still eligible?

Yes. It is important to note that you only must APPLY for TANF. If TANF denies you because you currently receive SSI, you may still be eligible. Combine your entire household income and see the income chart on the fact sheet to see if you are eligible.

Do you have a notary at your office I can use?

No. Please note that you must have your application notarized.

Can you make copies of my original documents?

No. It is your responsibility to make copies before you arrive. We also are not responsible for returning any original documents you mail to us.

I'd like to go over my application with someone before I submit it. Can someone review it for me?

Yes. We would be happy to sit down with you and go over your application to make sure it is complete. In order to facilitate this, please call (202)442-6009 to schedule an appointment. If you drop in without an appointment and wish speak to someone your wait time could be significant.

Will I continue to get TANF or SSI if I am awarded this subsidy?

Yes. The amount you receive from this program is based on how much TANF or SSI you already receive from the government. The amount you receive in food stamps may be affected.

How long does the application process take?

We have forty-five (45) days to process your application from day we receive all of the required documents. Please note the 45 days does not begin to run until we receive all documents, including the results of the FBI check and the legal custody order. Average processing times are significantly less though if you initially submit a complete application. Submitting an incomplete application will delay your application significantly.

What happens after I am approved?

After you are approved an appointment will be scheduled for you to visit our office so you can sign a subsidy agreement. Once you sign the subsidy agreement your case will become active and you will get a check in the mail the following month. The subsidy is NOT retroactive to the date you first submitted your application.

Can I have the subsidy directly deposited into my bank account?

No. We can only send you a check in the mail each month. On average, the check will arrive between the 10th and the 13th of each month.

Will you inform the child's parents I am receiving this subsidy?

No. Your application and involvement in this program is confidential. Your personal information may only be released at your request.

What kind of things can I pay for with this subsidy?

You can use the money you receive from this program ONLY on things that benefit the child listed in the subsidy agreement. This includes but is not limited to: groceries, school clothes, summer camp, a portion of your rent or utilities, etc.

Other Organizations Available to Assist You:**For those 60 and older**

Legal Counsel for the Elderly – (202)434-2120

Emmaus Senior Services – (202)745-1200

For those under 60

Children's Law Center – (202)467-4900 ext. 4

For those living in Anacostia or Shaw

Bread for the City (NW) – (202)265-2400

Bread for the City (SE) – (202)561-8587

For those families dealing the effects of HIV/AIDS

Family Ties Project – (202)547-3349

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